10. The necessity for stopping the further sale of tank-beds in the Eraniel taluk.

Mr. P. N. Daniel (Member, Eraniel taluk) said that the sale of irrigation tank-beds in South Travancore was an old subject on which a great deal had been said on previous occasions. The question was an important one and required careful and sympathetic consideration at the hands of the Government. The Member said that the cultivation of paddy was the most important and the biggest industry in South Travancore, and at the same time, it was the most precarious one among all industries. The ryot who cultivated paddy, notwithstanding his best efforts, had to depend upon many external circumstances, and, among them, water occupied the most, important place. Usually, there would be a shower or two in the middle of Medom, and, with it, the ryot would begin his cultivation. The monsoon generally set in about the middle of Edavom. Any delay in getting water on the two occasions, either in the shape of rain or from tanks or reservoirs, would greatly upset the ryot and alarm him. The question was therefore how to get in, store and preserve every possible drop of water, and that accounted for the origin of the numerous tanks. Even with the Kodayar Reservoir, the people were as badly off as before for water during the dry months of the year. There were many tanks which the people had made in their own lands at their cost. Those tanks were first free from any tax, they were then treated as *porambokes*, and, finally, they were considered as lands which the Government had a right to dispose of as they chose. The Member said that that was a source of great discouragement to private enterprise and he requested that the ryots should be encouraged in the matter of making tanks and maintaining them. The Member stated also that, while the Pechipara Dam was still under construction, it was thought that the Reservoir, when completed, could hold a quantity of water sufficient to irrigate all the then existing paddy lands as well as the new lands estimated to be brought under wet cultivation, even if there were no rains continuously for a couple of years. It was doubtful whether that statement could now be made even for a single rainless year. The Kodayar Project had not yet passed the *experimental* stage and the sale of tanks at such a time would therefore be premature. The Member also pointed out that, in South Travancore, the wet lands were mostly on the steeply-descending slopes of numerous hills, and, as such, if the sluices or the feeding channels were increased in number, the ryot would be on the safer side, but the scope for waste of water would be great. If, on the other hand, the sluices were reduced in number, the wastage of water would be less, but the ryot's position would be more precarious. If there were tanks in convenient places, all those evils could be prevented. The tanks in South Travancore thus served many useful and necessary purposes, so much so that none of them could be said to be *unnecessary*. If they could be made to retain water throughout the year, that was a condition much to be desired. The Member therefore prayed that the further sale of tank-beds might be stopped, until it was finally proved that irrigating the fields, even in rainless years, directly from the channel without the help of tanks, was really successful.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

11. The desirability of partitioning the Chengannur taluk into two, with Pathanamthitta as the head-quarters of the new taluk.

Mr. Koshi Thomas (Member, Chengannur taluk) pointed out that, of all the taluks in the State, Chengannur was the largest in point of area. The Tahsildar had Magisterial duties in 10 *pakuthies*, besides heavy Revenue and Devaswom work. In the taluk, the *puthuval*, *poramboke* and other revenue cases were abnormally heavy for one officer. The Tahsildar had also to go to the Sabarimala hills to conduct the Makaravilakku ceremony in the Sastha temple there at a time when the Utsavam would have commenced in the Chengannur temple. His presence was required in both places. Further, on the ground of distance, the supervision of the Achankoil Sastha temple, which was situated in the Kumbazha *pakuthi* of the Chengannur taluk, had been transferred to the Shencotta Tahsildar In that temple, Malayala *acharas* prevailed, but the temple had to be tacked on to a Tamil-speaking taluk, as the Chengannur taluk was far too extensive for any one officer to keep a tight grip over it. The temple required therefore to be retransferred to the Chengannur taluk.

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The taluk was mostly unoccupied formerly, but that state of affairs had long ago changed. There was at present keen competition for lands and many people from other taluks had entered the taluk and occupied most of the hitherto unoccupied area, and, in the near future, the population would become far more dense than it ever was. Replying to the Dewan, the Member said that the creation of a Stationary Magistrate's Court at Chengannur would not improve matters, as that would afford no relief to the inconveniences of the people in the eastern *pakuthies* in having to go to Chengannur for all matters connected with revenue work. There was already a Stationary Magistrate's Court at Pathanamthitta with a pucka building and a fairly decent staff. A slight addition to the staff was alone therefore necessary to make Pathanamthitta the head-quarters of the new taluk. On financial grounds also, the proposal deserved kind consideration. The Member therefore requested that the taluk be divided into two, and the new taluk, which might comprise the Pathanamthitta, Kumbazha, Elanthur, Omallur and Rani *pakuthies*, located at Pathanamthitta.

Dewan's reply.—The Peishkar will be asked to report on the question.

12. The need for the grant of lands for the occupation of the Pulayas.

Mr. Aiyan Kali (Member, Nominated) first expressed the gratitude of the Pulaya community for the benevolent policy of the Government in ameliorating their condition and also for the many acts of good hitherto done for their benefit. He next mentioned that Mr. Saradan Solomon was not a member of the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham, which was an organisation solely of the *Hindu* Pulayas, and he requested the Government not to consider any of his (Saradan Solomon's) representations as emanating from the Sangham.

Proceeding to his subject, the Member said that it was three years since the Government promised to register 500 acres of *puthuval* lands in the Vilappil *pakuthi* of the Neyyattinkara taluk in the names of the Pulayas. But the lands were not yet registered to them. It was stated that another six months would be required to remove the tree growth on the lands. He prayed that stringent orders might be issued to effect the registry without further delay and to settle the Pulayas on the lands.

Dewan's reply.—The Peishkar will be asked to expedite the settlement of the Pulayas on the 500 acres of land already granted to them in the Vilappil *pakuthi*.

Mr. C. Saradan Solomon (Member, Nominated) also warmly thanked the Government and the Dewan personally for the very generous policy in uplifting the Pulaya community. He said that, at the last session of the Assembly, he had asked for the registry of lands in the names of the Pulayas belonging to the Sadhu Jana Paripalana Sangham. He had also submitted some petitions pointing out specifically the lands which were available. But he regretted to state that nothing had yet been done to grant any lands to them. He therefore ventured to repeat the prayer and requested that early action might be taken to register whatever lands might be available—whether *puthuval*, *poramboke*, *kayal* or canal—in the names of the Pulayas in each taluk, if not in each *pakuthi*.

Dewan's reply.—Noted.

Mr. T. Chothi (Member, Nominated) thanked His Highness the Maha Raja and the Dewan, on behalf of the Pulaya community in Central Travancore, for the many benefits conferred on the community and for having nominated him as a Member. He said that the Pulayas of Central Travancore were in a more miserable condition than those of South Travancore. They had not as much freedom of action there, as he knew they had here, and the efforts of a few, who were working for their cause, had not yet attained fruition. The Government were therefore their only support. They had at present no places for occupation. Some Pulayas had occupied lands in the *pakuthies* of Ezhumattur, Cherukole, Rani and Pandalam Vadakkekara in the Thiruvalla and Chengannur taluks. He prayed that orders might be issued to register

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